

# Children with speech and language difficulties and reading comprehension in EFL

---

**Karagić, Valentina**

**Master's thesis / Diplomski rad**

**2018**

*Degree Grantor / Ustanova koja je dodijelila akademski / stručni stupanj:* **University of Zagreb, Faculty of Teacher Education / Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Učiteljski fakultet**

*Permanent link / Trajna poveznica:* <https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:147:546239>

*Rights / Prava:* [In copyright](#) / [Zaštićeno autorskim pravom.](#)

*Download date / Datum preuzimanja:* **2024-04-25**

*Repository / Repozitorij:*

[University of Zagreb Faculty of Teacher Education - Digital repository](#)



SVEUČILIŠTE U ZAGREBU  
UČITELJSKI FAKULTET  
ODSJEK ZA UČITELJSKE STUDIJE

**VALENTINA KARAGIĆ**  
**DIPLOMSKI RAD**

**CHILDREN WITH SPEECH AND LANGUAGE  
DIFFICULTIES AND READING  
COMPREHENSION IN EFL**

Zagreb, srpanj 2018.

**SVEUČILIŠTE U ZAGREBU**  
**UČITELJSKI FAKULTET**  
**ODSJEK ZA UČITELJSKE STUDIJE**  
**(Zagreb)**

**DIPLOMSKI RAD**

Ime i prezime pristupnika: Valentina Karagić

TEMA DIPLOMSKOG RADA: Children with speech and language difficulties and reading comprehension in EFL

MENTOR: doc.dr.sc. Marija Andraka

**Zagreb, srpanj 2018.**

**Zahvala:**

Veliku zahvalnost dugujem Ivi Palčić Strčić, učiteljici Osnovne škole Poliklinike SUVAG koja mi je pomogla svojim savjetima pri izradi ovog diplomskog rada i što je uvijek imala strpljenja i vremena za moje upite.

Hvala na svojoj pomoći i svemu što sam naučila od Vas!

## Table of contents

I SUMMARY .....	
II SAŽETAK .....	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DISORDERS .....	2
2.1. HEARING AND LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENTS .....	2
2.2. SPECIFIC LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENTS ( SLI ).....	4
2.3. LEXICAL KNOWLEDGE OF HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN .....	6
3. TEACHING ENGLISH TO HEARING IMPAIRED LEARNERS .....	6
3.1. MOTIVATION .....	7
3.2. CREATIVITY IN TEACHING .....	8
3.3. CLASSROOM ACCOMODATIONS.....	8
3.4. THE ROLE OF THE PARENTS .....	9
4. CHILDREN WITH SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES AND READING COMPREHENSION .....	10
5. ADJUSTMENTS IN READING COMPREHENSION EXERCISES .....	11
6. STUDY OF CROATIAN EFL LEARNERS IN THE 'SUVAG' POLYCLINIC PRIMARY SCHOOL.....	14
6.1. PARTICIPANTS.....	14
6.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	16
6.3. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH .....	16
6.3.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUMENT AND PROCEDURE .....	16
7. CONCLUSION .....	23
8. REFERENCES .....	25
9. APPENDICES.....	27
10. ŽIVOTOPIS PRISTUPNIKA .....	<b>Pogreška! Knjižna oznaka nije definirana.</b>

## **I SUMMARY**

A teacher who at least once had a pupil with speech and/or language disorder such as: dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia etc. in his/her class is aware of the fact that it is a demanding, responsible and very difficult job, especially when teaching foreign language. It is very important that such teachers are aware of their pupil's situation and diagnosis. A teacher has to educate him/herself about the disorder in order to help his/her learner in the right way. Parents are there to help teachers and that is why good communication between them is of great importance. Such disorders are sometimes genetic, so some parents also struggle with them. However, the causes can vary from unknown to, for example, prematurity or a certain trauma. It is very important to notice the symptoms on time and go to logopedic therapies in order to determine if the child can attend regular school or a special school for children with speech and/or language disorders. The biggest challenge both for the teachers and learners is reading comprehension. It can be difficult for pupils with a speech and language disorder to stay focused on a long text and to answer related comprehension questions afterwards. In this graduation thesis I wanted to investigate whether successful adjustments result in successfully solving reading comprehension tasks. The research was conducted in the SUVAG Polyclinic Primary School in Zagreb and the participants were seventh graders. They wrote the test twice, the first time with no adjustments and the second time with graphical and content adjustments of the text and tasks. As expected, the results were much better after the adjustments had been made.

Key words: speech and language difficulties, graphical adjustments, reading comprehension

## **II SAŽETAK**

Osoba učiteljske struke koja se barem jednom u svojoj struci susrela s učenikom koji ima neku govorno-jezičnu teškoću kao što su disleksija, disgrafija, diskalkulija i slično, zna koliko je to izazovan, zahtjevan i odgovoran posao, pogotovo kada se radi o poučavanju stranog jezika. Ono što je od izuzetne važnosti je da učitelji moraju biti svjesni situacije svojih učenika i najprije se educirati o njihovoj teškoći kako bi im mogli na ispravan način pomoći. U tome im pomažu i roditelji takvih učenika te je vrlo važno imati dobru komunikaciju s njima. Ponekad teškoće mogu biti rezultat genetskih utjecaja te se s njima suočavaju i roditelji

ili rodbina. Međutim, uzroci mogu varirati od nepoznatih do, na primjer, preranog rođenja ili određene traume. No izuzetno je važno na vrijeme uočiti simptome i odvesti dijete logopedu kako bi se napravila procjena težine teškoće i može li učenik pohađati redovnu školu ili školu s posebnim uvjetima obrazovanja za učenike s teškoćama. Jedan od najvećih izazova, kako za učenike, tako i za učitelje predstavlja čitanje s razumijevanjem. Vrlo je teško učeniku koji ima poteškoće u čitanju i/ili pisanju biti koncentriran na neki dugačak tekst o kojem kasnije još mora i odgovarati na pitanja. U radu sam željela dokazati kako uspješna prilagodba teksta i zadataka rezultiraju uspješnijim rješavanjem zadataka čitanja s razumijevanjem kod učenika s govorno-jezičnim teškoćama. Istraživanje sam provela tako da sam učenicima sedmoga razreda Osnovne škole Poliklinike SUVAG prvi puta dala pismenu vježbu čitanja s razumijevanjem bez ikakve prilagodbe. Rezultati su bili očekivano loši, a nakon analize sam napravila grafičku i sadržajnu prilagodbu istog teksta i istih zadataka te sam nakon otprilike dvadeset i osam dana učenicima dala pismenu vježbu drugi put. Rezultati su bili očekivano puno bolji te sam tako dokazala svoju pretpostavku.

Ključne riječi: govorno-jezične teškoće, grafičke prilagodbe teksta i zadataka, čitanje s razumijevanjem

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

We all know how much and why education is important. It is a process of developing different social and learning skills. It is actually a very long process through which children become prepared for mature life and their future profession. Every person in this world has the right to education. As participants of education we learn how to write, read, spell and pronounce words. We also learn how to communicate with other people and we make friends. All in all, it is a long, complex process in one person's life which sometimes brings some difficulties, too. Education is not simple or easy if someone deals with a serious difficulty and/or a disorder. One of the first things that we have to overcome through the process of education are some basic learning skills such as writing and reading. It sounds very easy and simple, but as already mentioned, it can be very difficult and challenging for those who struggle with some kind of speech and language disorder. It requires much more work, motivation and courage for both learners and their teachers. Teaching young learners with speech and/or language impairments is not simple. In fact, it is a complicated and strenuous job which demands specific techniques and ways of teaching. We all know that teachers have to be creative, capable, diligent and reliable people, but they need to possess extra amounts of all these characteristics if they teach someone that has any type of speech, language or even a hearing disorder. Those learners require much more help and time to solve problems and master teaching contents.

## **2. SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DISORDERS**

When children and adults in our society are perceived as having inordinate difficulty with their speech or language, a natural reaction is to ask whether those individuals have communication disorders (Damico and others, 2010). English teachers who at least once in their classroom had a child who deals with some speech and/or language disorder probably wondered how it is even possible to teach a foreign language to someone with these difficulties, when such learners have problems speaking and understanding their own language. First of all, teachers should know the difference between a speech impairment and a language disorder. When people talk about it just as some problems in communication we may think that those two are the same, but there is, in fact, a significant difference. According to experts and the Oxford Dictionary, speech is "an act, or manner of speaking". It refers to the actual sound of spoken language. It is an oral form of communication. Simply, speech is talking: using the muscles of the tongue, lips, jaw and vocal tract in a very precise and coordinated way to produce the recognizable sounds that make up language. On the other hand, language refers to a whole system of words and symbols – written, spoken or expressed with gestures and body language – that is used to communicate meaning.

### **2.1. HEARING AND LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENTS**

Hearing is the ability to recognize sound. A person suffering from a hearing impairment has difficulty perceiving or identifying a sound clearly due to auditory problems. The impairment may be unilateral or bilateral. The degree of hearing loss can be classified into five levels : mild, moderate, moderately-severe, severe and profound. A child whose degree of hearing loss is mild is unable to perceive and identify soft and quiet sounds such as whispering. Moderate hearing loss means a child is incapable of understanding what another speaker says during the conversation, and for that level hearing aids are a necessity. At the third, moderately-severe level, people are unable to clearly hear loud noises such as the ring of the mobile phone. A person whose degree of hearing loss is severe, is incapable of clearly hearing extremely loud noises such as screaming, shouting or the noise of the vacuum cleaner. The last degree of

hearing loss is profound, in which a person has difficulties identifying and perceiving any sound.

Language impairments are disorders of language that interfere with communication, adversely affect performance and/or functioning in the student's typical learning environment, and result in the need for exceptional student education. (Clark, J.G. (1981). Uses and abuses of hearing loss classification. *Asha*, 23, 493-500). A Language impairment is defined as a disorder in one or more of the basic learning processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language. (Clark, 1981). Uses and abuses of hearing loss classification. *Asha*, 23, 493-500 ). These include:

Phonology – Phonology is defined as the sound system of a language and the linguistic conventions of a language that guide the sound selection and sound combinations used to convey meaning;

Morphology – Morphology is defined as the system that governs the internal structure of words and the construction of word forms;

Syntax – Syntax is defined as the system governing the order and combination of words to form sentences, and the relationships among the elements within a sentence;

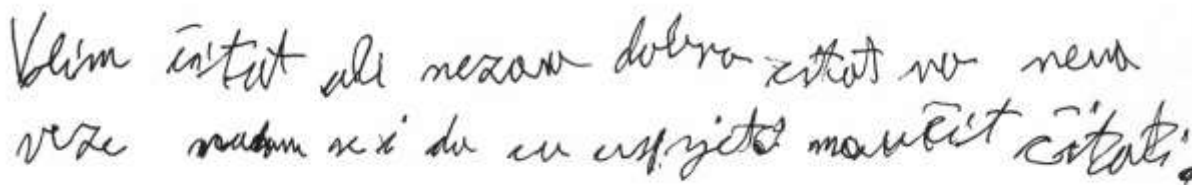
Semantics – Semantics is defined as the system that governs the meanings of words and sentences; and

Pragmatics – Pragmatics is defined as the system that combines language components in functional and socially appropriate communication.

The language impairment may manifest itself in significant difficulties affecting listening comprehension, oral expression, social interaction, reading, writing, or spelling. A language impairment is not primarily the result of factors related to chronological age, gender, culture, ethnicity, or limited English proficiency.

## 2.2. SPECIFIC LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENTS ( SLI )

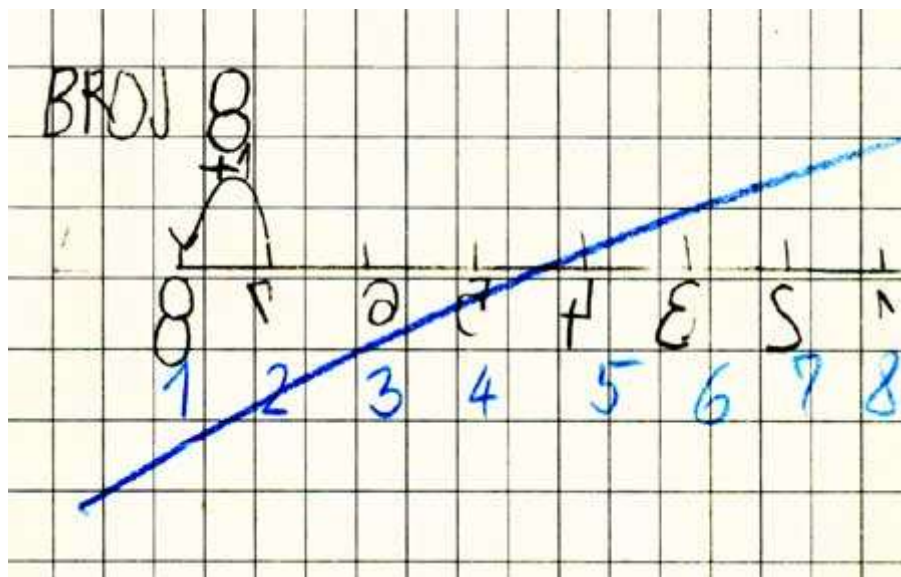
Specific language impairments show at around 6% of the preschool children. The frequency of SLI decreases to 3% during the school period, spontaneously, and during the logopedic therapy (Muter and Likierman 2010). Very often, because of the language impairments, children deal with learning impairments ( usually writing and reading ). A specific type of learning impairment is called dyslexia. According to the manual for the education of teachers who work with hearing and/or speech impaired learners, dyslexia is the impairment of decoding symbols and researches show that it happens to 4-8% of the children. (Bakota, Bošnjak and others, 2015.) Some of the symptoms of that learning impairment are: the child is not aware of the fact that the sound is represented as a letter in written form, he/she has disabilities connecting sounds and syllables, he/she replaces some graphically similar letters ( b-d ), ( g-k ), ( b-p ), ( z-s ), he/she cannot understand and interpret well what he/she reads etc. Such disabilities demand logopedic therapies. Another specific writing impairment is dysgraphia. It is the inability of the learner to develop his/her writing skill which manifests itself in many specific mistakes such as: disability in connecting letters with sounds (graphemes and phonemes ), incorrect punctuation, wrong writing order and so on.



Picture 1 : <http://hud.hr/disgrafija/> A 12-year-old girl with dyslexia and dysgraphia

Picture 1 is a visual example of the handwriting of a child who has dyslexia and dysgraphia. Those two impairments usually come together but sometimes a person can have only one of them. It is seen from the picture how the letters are not connected well, some of them are bigger than the others and everything is quite messy, disorganised and hard to read. Another specific language impairment is dyscalculia. A child who suffers from this SLI has difficulties in making arithmetical calculations, as a result of a brain disorder. Such learners have difficulties in understanding mathematical terms, they cannot decide which of two digits is larger, and have limitations in working memory capacity. Dyscalculia is estimated to occur in up to 3% of the population (Westwood, 2008). Of course, when a learner simply performs poorly in maths, it does not necessarily mean that he/she suffers from dyscalculia. It takes some time for

psychologists to determine if a child has dyscalculia or not. However, if a teacher has a learner with such a specific language impairment, he/she should know how to help him/her to overcome mathematical contents. The teacher can make some adjustments in exams and exercises which can help the learner solve mathematical tasks. Such a learner should be allowed to use calculator all the time in order to solve addition, subtraction, multiplication and division without problems. Picture 2 shows an example of a first grader with dyscalculia who writes numbers in the direction that is the reverse of the natural way, the so-called mirror writing.



Picture 2: <http://hud.hr/matematika/> First grader, mirror writing

Stuttering, or stammering is a speech disorder characterized by repetition of sounds, syllables, or words by prolongation of sounds; and interruptions in speech known as blocks. An individual who stutters knows exactly what he or she would like to say but has trouble producing a normal flow of speech. These speech disruptions may be accompanied by struggle behaviors, such as rapid eye blinks or tremors of the lips. Stuttering can make it difficult to communicate with other people, which often affects a person's quality of life and interpersonal relationships. Stuttering can also negatively influence job performance and opportunities, and treatment can come at a high financial cost. Symptoms of stuttering can vary significantly throughout a person's day. In general, speaking before a group or talking on the telephone may make a person's stuttering more severe, while singing, reading, or speaking in unison may temporarily reduce stuttering. (<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/>)

On the other hand, a similar speech impairment to stuttering is cluttering. A person with cluttering has problems with articulation, which is quite inattentive and superficial. The

narrative discourse of the person with this impairment abounds in repetitions, reformulations of sentences, and unfinished thoughts.

## **2.3. LEXICAL KNOWLEDGE OF HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN**

Radić, Bradarić-Jončić & Farago (2008) say that lexical development is an important aspect of language development. Science shows that a mature person knows about a hundred thousand different words. That knowledge of a particular word means that a person knows how a word is pronounced (it is called phonological knowledge), knows how to use that word in different situations and combinations (grammatical knowledge), and what is the meaning of a particular word (semantical knowledge). That knowledge about a particular word is called mental lexicon. So, when we talk about lexical development, we talk about mental lexicon development. (Hoff, 2001). In the process of a child's normal maturation, his/her knowledge of the words rises for about three thousand words a year. By the end of high school, the vocabulary of the average pupil consists of forty thousand words (Norris, 1995; Luethke-Stahlman, 1998). The first word by a hearing child is produced in his/her first year and it is usually something related to an object in a child's sight which parents name when a child is focused on it. By the eighteenth month of their age, hearing children know about fifty different words. The most intensive period of acquiring words is from the fifteenth to the twenty-fourth month of a child's life. In that period children acquire ten to twelve words a day. (Hoff, 2001.)

## **3. TEACHING ENGLISH TO HEARING IMPAIRED LEARNERS**

Teaching a foreign language to someone who has some kind of a hearing and/or speech impairment is very difficult because such learners have quite a lot of problems with learning and developing their own mother tongue. However, they have their own right to learn another, second language. As teachers we should be aware of the challenges and the effort that should be invested in that type of teaching. There are some strategies and different ways of communication that hearing impaired learners prefer to use when learning. Teachers should always give them more time while speaking or looking at the presentation. When giving directions, sentences have to be short, clear, concise and a teacher should avoid complicated vocabulary. Of course, there should be a lot of hand gestures and facial expressions to make learners feel more included in the lesson. The structure of the lesson should be clear and teachers should always write key words on the board, prepare a Power-Point presentation, some flash cards, or anything similar that will be visually clear to learners.

### **3.1. MOTIVATION**

Motivation is one of the most important parts of every lesson. Actually, it is an influential factor in the teaching learning process because the success of learning depends on high or low motivation. Harmer reported in his book “The Practice of English Language Teaching” that motivation is some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do some things in order to achieve something (Harmer, 2007: 51). On the other hand, Brown (2001) defines motivation based on behavioristic and cognitive definition. Based on behaviorism Brown defines it as anticipation of reinforcement which is a powerful concept for the classroom. Based on cognitive definition, Brown classified the definition of motivation into three categories. The first definition is based on drive theory, motivation stems from basic innate drives, so motivation has been existing since we were born. According to the second one, based on hierarchy, motivation is something that comes from individual needs. In the third one, based on self-control theory, motivation is something that appears if there is opportunity to make someone to make own choices about what to pursue and what not to pursue (self control) (Brown, 2001:73-75). So, if our pupils are not motivated, the lesson will not be successful. First of all, teachers should know how to develop and create a positive and comfortable atmosphere in their classroom. Otherwise he/she cannot motivate pupils for the lesson. As teachers, we should find a way to encourage them to listen and to cooperate. Thus, if we want to have a succesful lesson, we should know how to motivate our learners. There are many different ways of motivating

them before going deeply into a lesson. Motivation is not only important at the beginning of the lesson. It is important to motivate learners at the introductory part of the lesson, but, of course we should keep motivating them through every other stage of the lesson. We can use some of these motivational techniques: crossroads, games such as the Memory game or Hangman, the Word Association game... We can also divide our pupils into smaller groups or teams and play a quiz, make mind maps etc. We can get their attention if we play a short video, cartoon, or a song for example. We can basically do anything that is appropriate for their age and that particular lesson. The main aim is to get their concentration and cooperation for the rest of the lesson and by having motivation, pupils will be enthusiastic in the teaching-learning process so and will be pushed to study (in this case) English well.

### **3.2. CREATIVITY IN TEACHING**

There are several different definitions of creativity. Different authors tried to define creativity in the simplest and clearest way. According to the Merriam Webster's dictionary, creativity is the ability to create. On the other hand, American psychologist Robert Sternberg (1996) says that creativity is a decision to buy low and sell high in the world of ideas. We can say that creativity is our ability to do or make something new in a way that is appropriate for the audience and the situation. It is definitely one of the most important characteristics of a person who decided to become a teacher. As teachers we should be creative and we should know how to encourage creativity in our pupils. Creative people have some specific characteristics such as: openness to extrinsic and intrinsic experiences, sensitivity, the ability of thinking that goes against logic, they often ask 'Why?'...Creativity in education has big importance because it encourages children to learn something new in an interesting way. It is important to have a creative classroom because it gives an opportunity to children to learn through fun. Using songs, videos, cartoons, short stories also make learning fun and interesting.

### **3.3. CLASSROOM ACCOMODATIONS**

Classroom accomodations are always important especially when we have a learner or learners with some impairments. As teachers, we should always help our students as much as we can. We know that there are special schools for students with hearing impairments and/or speech or language disorders, but sometimes those learners are placed in regular schools, in classrooms

with hearing learners. If a teacher gets that type of a learner he/she should know how to make proper accommodation for him/her. In most schools today, classrooms are big with fifteen or sixteen school desks, so teachers should always think about where to seat their learners due to some of their characteristics and abilities. It is logical that if we have a child with some impairment we will not place him in the last desk, far away from the board and the teacher. There are some rules of communication according to the manual for teaching assistants (Puškarić, Vrban, 2017). Proper classroom accommodations for hearing-impaired learners are important because they help them stay focused as much as they can. According to Underwood (2003), if properly implemented in the classroom, these accommodations and modifications may help minimize the social, educational and emotional hardships that many students who are deaf or hard of hearing experience. Underwood (2003) also says that it is extremely important that teachers know how to successfully provide adequate academic instructions. Teaching hearing impaired learner is not easy. Teachers should be aware of the fact that being in a process of education as a hearing-impaired learner is much more difficult, especially if placed in a classroom with hearing students. Some accommodations that can help are, as already said, seating such learners in front of the class so that they can have a clear view of the teacher's face while speaking. The teacher's face should be in the height of the learner's eyes and the teacher should always look the learner in the eyes while speaking. The teacher's face should be lighted well, turned to the source of the light. The teacher should not shout, but speak in loud and clear voice, use simple words and short and simple sentences. Also, the teacher should not make exaggerated facial expressions and always give a visual sign to the learner so that he could know who is speaking during the group discussions. A child who is deaf or hard of hearing (D/HH) should also be placed somewhere away from the outside noise. Frequently checking that he/she understood everything is also very important. Such accommodations are not complicated but they help such learners to stay focused on the lesson. As already mentioned, we do not want our learners to feel isolated or have some emotional issues because they are placed in the classroom with hearing peers. We want them to feel comfortable, happy and safe.

### **3.4. THE ROLE OF THE PARENTS**

The most important and biggest role of the parents in their child's education is to support him/her and help with learning at home. When a parent has a child with some disorder/impairment it is particularly important to have a good cooperation with the teacher. In

this case, when we speak about children who struggle with hearing or language disorders, parents can help teachers in many ways. First of all, they can tell the teacher about the specific impairment. When did it happen? Is it the consequence of some accident or something else? Is a child born with the impairment or not? Do parents or other members of the family have similar impairments? Answers to these questions can help the teacher to understand better the impairment his/her learner is struggling with. The role of the parents is, of course, learning and exercising with their child at home, too. Effective teacher-parent communication can be of major importance for the teacher to be able to estimate the learner's level. "The idea that parents and teachers working together can help children achieve more than they could independent of one another is a recurring theme in current government policy (DfEE, 1997a, 1997b). Thus, teachers and parents should always be good partners in education, for the prosperity of the child.

#### **4. CHILDREN WITH SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES AND READING COMPREHENSION**

My aim in this graduation thesis was to explore and show what types of strategies, methods and techniques can be used to successfully support and improve the development of reading comprehension of learners who are confronted with any type of speech and/or language impairment. Reading comprehension presents one of the most difficult skills in studying foreign language for someone who is deaf, hard of hearing or has some speech and language difficulties. Teachers who work with learners who are deaf, hard of hearing or have some speech/language disorders must be aware of any techniques, methods and strategies which will help to develop their learner's reading comprehension skills as much as they can, in order to become successful college students or find a proper job after high school. This is very difficult and challenging, both for teachers and learners, because those learners have serious problems with reading in their own mother tongue. Probably the most concise definition of reading is that it is the ability to assign meaning to a string of printed symbols. It may seem very easy to learn how to read since we deal with it in the first grade, but it becomes extremely complicated and challenging for learners who have problems with understanding, mixing some letters, or if they deal with stuttering, dyslexia, dysgraphia or cluttering. For such learners reading presents a big problem and it takes some time for them to read something successfully. In reading comprehension tasks, speech and language disabilities affect the learner's ability to understand the meaning of words and passages. Pupils with some disability in reading comprehension may also struggle with

basic reading skills such as decoding words, but comprehension is the greatest weakness. Although difficulty in decoding the words on a page is a frequent cause of reading comprehension problems, between 10 and 15% of children experience poor comprehension despite maintaining normal levels of reading accuracy and fluency (Stothard & Hulme, 1995; Yuill & Oakhill, 1991).

Also, some learners with such impairments in reading comprehension can read aloud with little or no difficulty pronouncing words, but they do not understand or remember what they have read. Reading aloud, their words and phrases are often read with no feeling, no change in tone, no logical phrasing and no rhythm or pace. So, such learners have difficulties with understanding the important ideas in reading passages. Their phrasing and fluency are often weak. They frequently avoid reading and are frustrated with reading tasks in school. Children with such impairments simply have a skill deficit in this specific area and they need much more time and they must work harder to get their work done. All learners who struggle with such disabilities know that they are behind their peers which can affect their self-esteem and motivation, so as teachers we should know how to make them feel comfortable, brave and confident in order to become as successful as they can be. However, reading comprehension is a very important academic skill through which we can evaluate many things. It is the complex outcome of the process of constructing meaning from print. Reading comprehension, which has been defined as gaining an understanding of written text through a process of extracting and constructing meaning (RAND, 2002), is perhaps one of the most essential academic skills (Nash & Snowling, 2006; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000).

## **5. ADJUSTMENTS IN READING COMPREHENSION EXERCISES**

When speaking of adjustments in reading comprehension exercises, it is very important to describe graphical and spatial adjustment. When preparing the appropriate text for reading comprehension everything starts with its graphical layout. According to the manual for adjustments of the teaching content in English language (Ajduković, Palčić Strčić and others 4-20) there are some important graphical adjustments that are necessary when preparing text and exercises for learners with speech and language difficulties. Some of them are listed below:

- avoid using white paper if pupils suffer from dyslexia and/or dysgraphia, use colour paper instead
- use some of these fonts: Arial, Calibri, Open Dyslexic, Dyslexia, DashNess, Comic Sans
- the size of the font should be fourteen or even bigger
- always use left alignment
- use wide margins
- spacing of the text should be 1,5
- key words should be written in bigger font, bolded, in colour, highlighted or even circled
- avoid italics and underlined words
- never start new sentence at the end of the line (it confuses them)
- write every sentence in a new line
- write titles and subtitles, and if possible, leave an empty space between them
- text divide in separate lines
- use numeration
- use short, clear and simple sentences
- avoid complicated and difficult language
- leave enough of empty space so that learner can on every question answer in separate line
- use pictures, symbols, icons and widgets which visually present concept of the text and accelerate communication
- if possible, use color coding - a system for displaying information by using different colors ( for example the timetable; every subject color in different colour in it and put those colors on the classroom door )
- avoid tasks with mixed words (for example: *You should wear a (lethem).*\_\_\_\_\_)
- in filling the gaps, the suggested word should come in front of the line, and the key word should be written in bigger font, for example:

My mum (COOK) \_\_\_\_\_ dinner every day.

Spatial adjustments are necessary as much as graphical ones. Some of them are listed below:

- children should sit in a semicircle

- children with dyslexia, dysgraphia and other impairments should always sit nearest to the teacher and the board
- children with ADD/ADHD should be placed away from windows and the door
- it is good that such learners always sit at the same place because they have their own right to a routine and control
- if possible, the teacher should secure a special place in the classroom, the so called working place where a learner can work on his daily exercises without any distractions
- put a sign on the floor or at the wall where a learner needs to stay when they have to stand in the line
- if possible, put the schedule of activities for each day so that a learner can see it.

#### Other adjustments:

- at the beginning of the lesson we should check if the learner is ready for right and active studying
- do not require from a learner to know how to read and write transcription of words
- copy the plan of the board and give it to the learner
- longer time for processing and exercising should be foreseen
- always use concise and simpler texts
- before learning new vocabulary, the old one should be checked
- if necessary, allow writing everything in large letters
- allow some 'time-out' if a child feels tired or unable to do something

#### Giving instructions:

a) oral instructions: - they need to be short, clear and concise

- they need to be graded
- repeat directions many times to be sure that a child understood them
- ask learner to repeat the instructions

b) written instructions: - always write them in the mother tongue and in the foreign language

- read instructions to the learner and check if he/she understood it
- write instructions one below the other

## **6. STUDY OF CROATIAN EFL LEARNERS IN THE ' SUVAG ' POLYCLINIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The main goal of this study was to test how children with speech and language difficulties deal with reading comprehension tasks, and also to prove that successful adjustments to these tasks result in successfully solving them. The participants in the study were eight pupils attending the seventh grade in the ' SUVAG ' Polyclinic Primary School in Zagreb. Those learners have speech and language difficulties which are listed below with their explanations.

### **6.1. PARTICIPANTS**

<b>' SUVAG ' Polyclinic Primary School, seventh grade, eight pupils</b>	<b>- description of the speech and language difficulties</b>
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- unadopted reading technique</li><li>- poor understanding of the read text</li><li>- poor vocabulary</li><li>- difficulties in written expression</li></ul>
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- poorer vocabulary</li><li>- extreme difficulties in understanding and expression</li><li>- difficulties in structuring sentences</li><li>- asyntactic</li><li>- working memory difficulties</li><li>- pragmatical impairments</li></ul>

	- poor understanding of the written language
3.	- poor understanding of the read text - difficulties in expressing writing - poor working memory - poorer vocabulary
4.	- difficulties in understanding and expression - extremely poor vocabulary - working memory difficulties - poor understanding of the written language
5.	- difficulties in language development and language expression - poorer working memory skills - inadequate reading technique - poor understanding of the read text
6.	- difficulties in understanding and expression - poorer vocabulary - working memory difficulties - speech fluency difficulties
7.	- difficulties in understanding and expression - difficulty in naming things - poorer vocabulary - working memory difficulties
8.	- poorer vocabulary - difficulties in written expression - working memory difficulties - a pronunciation disorder that affects understanding of the boy's speech

The fact which we cannot deny is that children with speech and language difficulties, such as these participants, will not successfully solve reading comprehension tasks. However, the hypothesis is that if appropriate adjustments are made to the reading comprehension exercise, success will come.

## **6.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. Does the adjustment of the text and tasks in reading comprehension affect their successful solving?
2. How do pupils with speech and language difficulties solve reading comprehension tasks with minimum or no adjustment?
3. How do pupils with speech and language difficulties solve reading comprehension tasks with maximum adjustment?
4. What type of adjustment is necessary?

## **6.3. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH**

Sample: eight EFL pupils attending the seventh grade of the 'SUVAG' Polyclinic Primary School in Zagreb

Measuring instrument: reading comprehension tasks

### **6.3. DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUMENT AND PROCEDURE**

This research was conducted in the ' SUVAG ' Polyclinic Primary School in Zagreb. The ' SUVAG ' Polyclinic is a medical institution which provides health care for people with speech and/or hearing impairments. The research consisted of two parts. Both times pupils had to do a reading comprehension exercise, but in the first part the text and tasks did not have any adjustments. They had to do the exercise as if they did not struggle with any disorders. This reading comprehension exercise consisted of the text ' *One Day at the ZOO* ' which was written by the author of this thesis (Appendix 1), and four tasks about the text. The first task was *true/false/doesn't say*, where pupils had to circle T/F/DS according to the information contained in the text. The second one was a multiple choice answer task where pupils had to choose between answers a,b or c and circle the correct one. The third task consisted of one table with sentences which they had to match in order to get the whole, correct sentence according to the

text. The last task was with mixed sentences which the pupils had to put in the right order. When doing the reading comprehension with children with speech and language difficulties it is recommended that the text is known to them. This time a text was used which they had never seen before, but they knew the topic well because they did something similar in their English lesson before. As already mentioned, when pupils did the exercise for the first time, both the text and tasks were written in the way they would be used with regular pupils in regular school, with no adjustments, because we wanted to see how they would do it. They solved the exercise for the first time on 28 March 2018 and it started at 11:30 am. The pupils started to write at 11:35, after receiving short instructions. It is important to mention that seven pupils have Individualized <sup>1</sup>Education Program, and one of them has the Personalized Education Program<sup>2</sup>. Pupils got two papers, one of them contained the text ' *One Day at the ZOO* ', and the other one was with tasks. The text was written in Times New Roman font, size 12, just as the tasks. Four students finished at 11:54, one student at 11:58, another one at 12:03, the seventh student at 12:13, and the last one (a student with the Personalized Education Program) finished at 12:15. The reading comprehension exercise had thirty-four points in total and the scoring scale is below:

0 – 49 % = 1	0 – 16 = 1
50 – 61 % = 2	17 – 20 = 2
62 – 81 % = 3	21 – 27 = 3
82 – 91 % = 4	28 – 31 = 4
92 – 100 % = 5	32 – 34 = 5

This is the score list that the teacher in the ' SUVAG ' Polyclinc Primary School uses, and it is a slightly stricter than in regular schools. Below is the scoring scale from another English teacher which I used to compare grades.

---

<sup>1</sup> Individualized Education Program, also called the IEP, is a document that is developed for each public school child who needs special education.

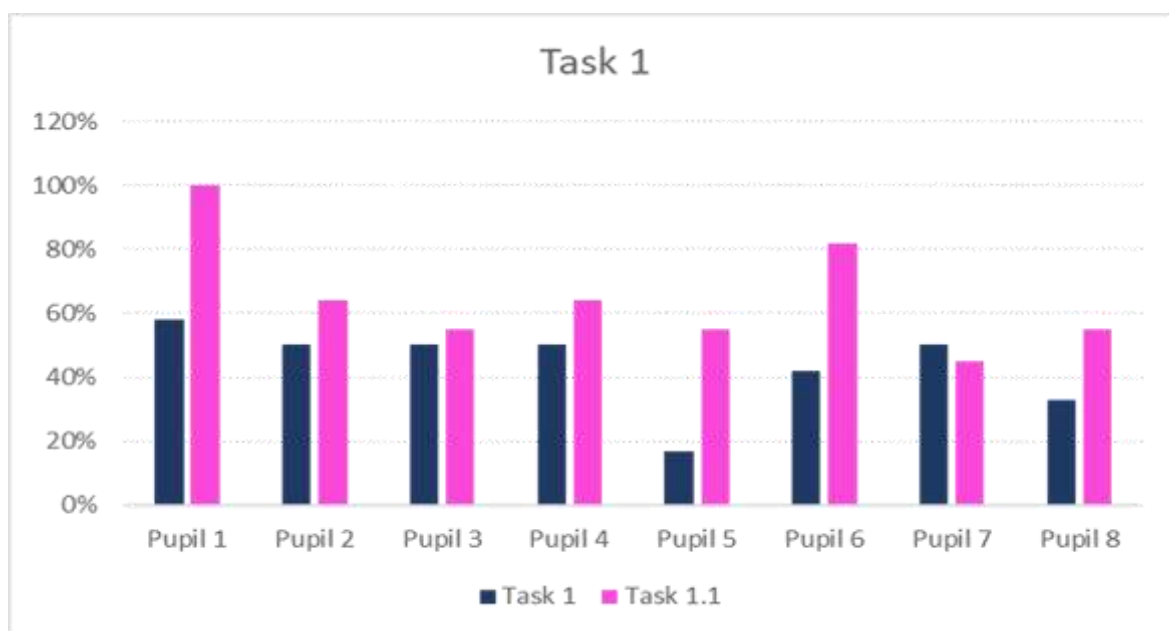
<sup>2</sup> Personalized Education Program is a document developed for each public school child who needs special, personalized education

0 – 49 % = 1	0 – 16 = 1
50 – 64 % = 2	17 – 21 = 2
65 – 77 % = 3	22 – 26 = 3
78 – 90 % = 4	27 – 30 = 4
91 – 100 % = 5	31 – 34 = 5

The first task was quite difficult for the pupils. It consisted of twelve sentences regarding the text and they had to decide if they are true, false or the text doesn't say. The results were not very good. Only one pupil managed to solve more than half of the sentences (the pupil with seven out of twelve points) but the others solved only six or even fewer sentences correctly. Those were expected results because pupils with speech and language difficulties cannot manage T/F/DS tasks without any adjustments. The text was quite long and visually too large for them, and they got twelve sentences for which they had to go back through that long text and see if something was true, false or the text didn't say. The option 'doesn't say' was in general very complicated to them because they had to be concentrated on the text and some sentences were a bit tricky, such as '*Mary adores animals.*' Only two pupils solved this sentence correctly (the correct answer is true) and the others circled 'doesn't say'. The text says '*My name is Mary and I am an animal lover.*' From this sentence they had to conclude that Mary adores animals, but they could not do it, because their speech and language difficulties prevent them from concluding the meaning of the word 'adore' only from the context of the text.

In general it is very complicated and difficult for learners with such disorders to stay focused on such a long text. They have problems with mixing letters and focus. If we give them a text with no graphical adjustment they become lost, especially if they have to go through it over and over again. It represents a serious problem to them because everything is visually scattered and nothing is bolded, so they cannot conclude that they have to focus on certain information.

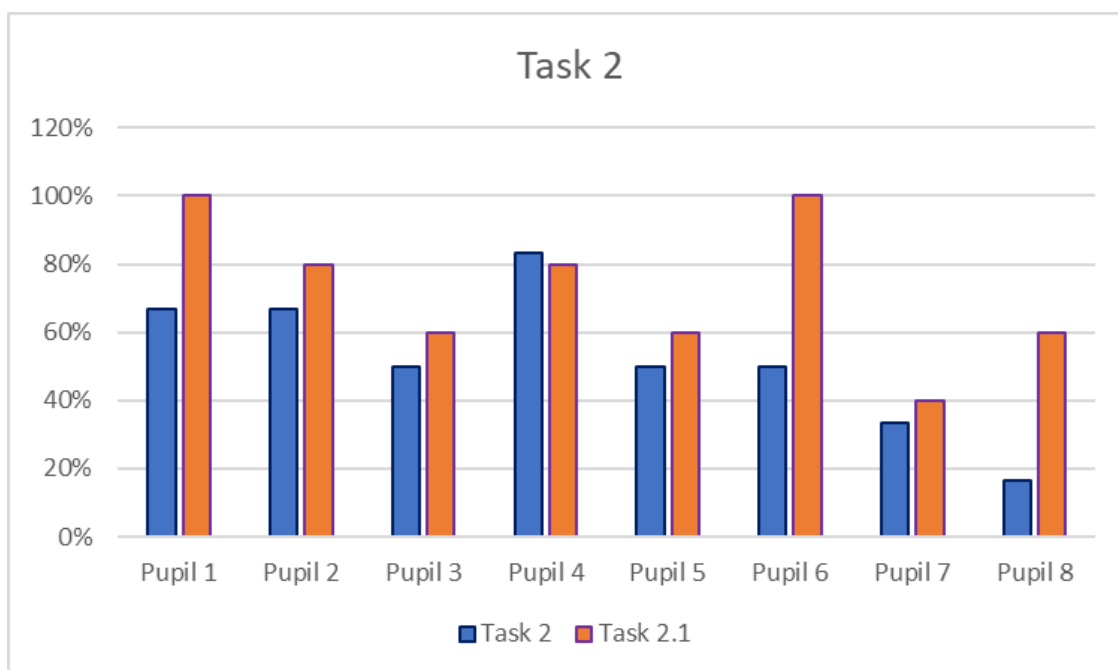
When I did the testing for the second time, I removed one sentence from the first task because the adjustment also means to give fewer sentences if there are too many of them. Now students had eleven instead of twelve sentences. The font was much bigger and the instructions were put in a frame and written in both, English and Croatian. I bolded the key words in the sentences in order to show pupils which words they had to be focused on and I wrote some sentences in a simpler way, without using complicated words that confused them during the first testing.



Graph 1: Results of the first task before and after the adjustments

Graph 1 shows the results pupils achieved in the first task before and after the adjustments were made in the reading comprehension activity. It can be seen how pupils progressed in the same task after some time and with certain adjustments. Only one pupil (pupil 7) did not progress and had a slightly lower score in the second testing, but it is always possible that something like this happens, because every child is different and, every one of them reacts differently to the stress in school. This pupil's lower score is probably the result of the lack of concentration because of the chemistry exam they also had on that day. Pupil 1 made the biggest progress (100%).

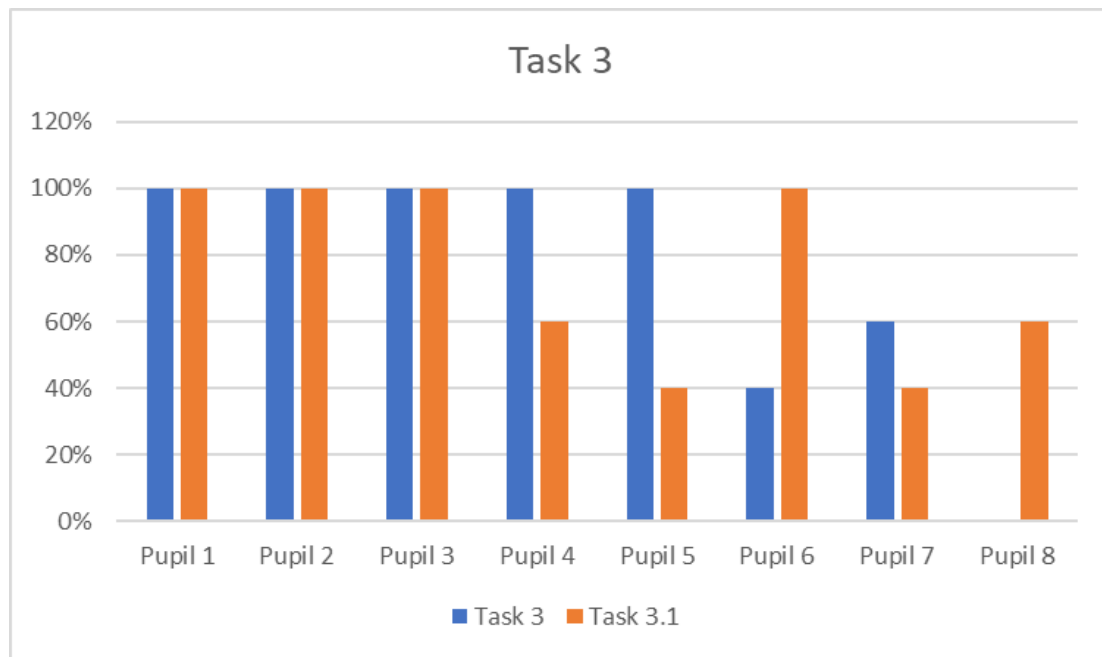
The second task was also somewhat difficult. They had to choose between answers a,b or c and circle the correct one. Some of the sentences posed some difficulty because they had to conclude and predict the answer from the text, as it was not said literally. For example, the fifth question said: *'When Mary and Bill got home: a)Mary fell asleep immediately, b)They had family dinner, c)Bill showed the photos to their parents.* The text says *'Bill showed them the photos and afterwards we had family dinner.'* The correct answer is c) *Bill showed the photos to their parents*, but they were confused because family dinner is also mentioned so they were not sure what happened first. Only one pupil solved this sentence correctly, while the others circled b) *they had family dinner*. From this task we can see how it is important to give pupils sentences straight from the text otherwise they cannot conclude or predict the correct answer. If two actions are mentioned in the same sentence in the text, but we split them in the answers, the pupils may not conclude the correct answer.



*Graph 2: Results of the second task before and after the adjustments*

Graph 2 shows the results of the second task before and after the adjustments are presented. The blue column represents pupils' success after the first testing, and the orange column represents their success after the second testing. It happened again that one pupil did not make progress but the reason is probably similar to the situation in the first task (lack of concentration, stress). Other pupils made a considerable, visible progress. Pupil 6 made the biggest progress in this task (100%).

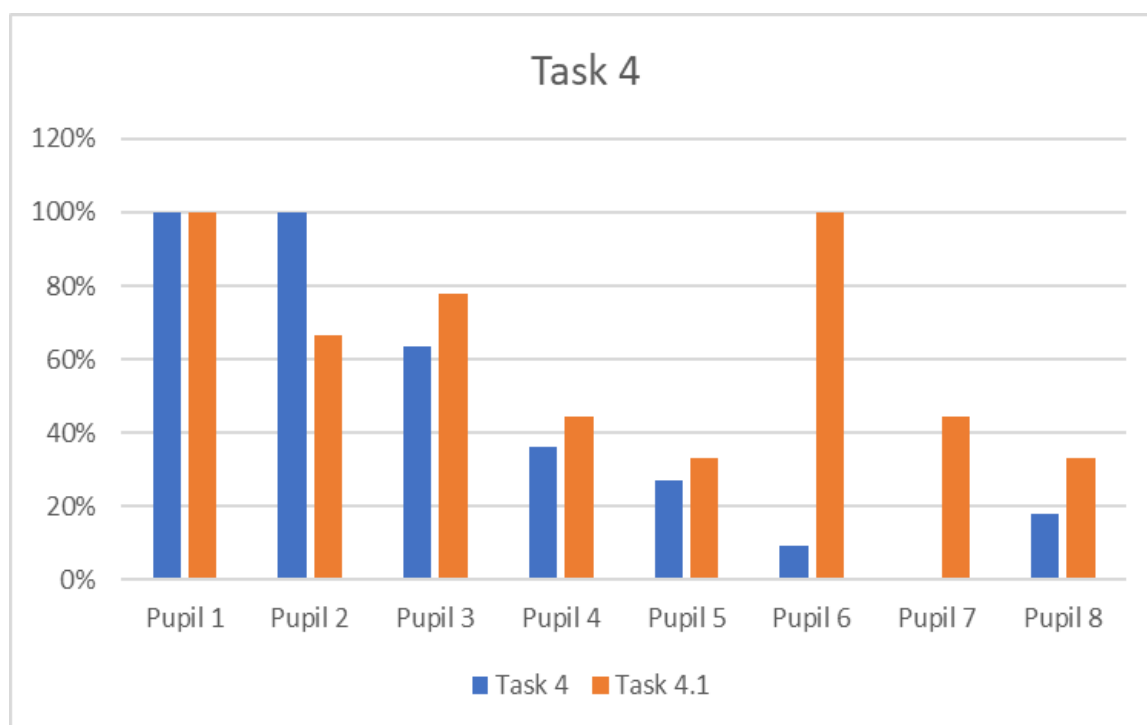
The third task was solved most successfully. As many as five out of eight pupils managed to do it correctly. There was a table with five separated sentences from the text and their task was to match them in order to get the whole, correct sentence. Even though five pupils managed to match all of the sentences correctly, two of them did two and three sentences, and one pupil did not manage to do any sentence. It is important to mention that one of those pupils is the boy who has a Personalized Education Program.



*Graph 3: Results of the third task before and after the adjustments*

Graph 3 presents the results of task 3. The blue column shows pupils' success before, and the orange column shows their success after the adjustments. It can be seen from the graph that the results of the first testing were better. The reason is probably the lack of concentration because it is not possible that the task was more difficult the second time.

The last task was the most difficult one. The pupils had to put sentences in the right order according to the text in order to get the whole story. There were twelve sentences from the text where I solved the first one, so that the pupils could be sure what the beginning of the text was. Two pupils put all of the sentences in the correct order, but the others were not so successful. One student managed to do seven out of eleven sentences, but the others managed to solve only two or three sentences correctly. The reason for that might be that eleven sentences is too much for pupils with speech and language difficulties. It was very complicated to them and they simply got lost. The results from the first testing were quite poor but expected. However, it gave us the real picture of reading comprehension exercises of someone who struggles with speech and language difficulties. I did the first testing without any adjustments because I wanted to see and compare the results in order to get the picture how to adjust the text and tasks as much as I could. On purpose, the second testing was held on 14 May, seven weeks after the first testing. I wanted to give them some time before the second testing because they had Easter holidays and their regular exams in other subjects.



*Graph 4: Results of the fourth task before and after the adjustments*

As can be seen from Graph 4, task 4 was solved more successfully by the majority of pupils after the adjustments. Only pupil 2 did not make any progress. Moreover, he managed to solve all of the sentences the first time and failed to do so in the second attempt. Pupil 1 had the same result in both testing, and Pupil 7 got 0 points in the first testing, but managed to solve the task the second time. Others made a visible, big progress.

As already mentioned, one pupil that participated in this research was in the Personalized Education Program, so I had to give him this exercise for the third time. The third testing was done on 1 June 2018 and the text and the tasks were written with maximum adjustment. It means that the text was divided into paragraphs and after each paragraph there was a task. The text and the tasks were further simplified (Appendix 8). After the third testing the pupil managed to get a positive grade. He scored 11/18 and got the grade 2. He missed a better grade by only one point.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Teachers who teach pupils with speech and language difficulties definitely have to be much more educated than the others. As already mentioned, the first thing they have to learn is about their pupils' disorders. How much of these exist, what are the symptoms, how long their pupils struggle with them, since birth or did the disorders develop at some point in their life and so on. Another important thing is to have good communication with parents because a pupil spends half of the day at school, and the other half at home, doing homework and exercising with his/her parents. Teaching a foreign language to someone who has problems and complications with their own mother tongue is a difficult and challenging job. As already said, it demands extra education, knowledge, time, motivation and creativity. Such teachers have to be aware of the fact that English lessons with such learners are something completely different than regular lessons, when teaching pupils who do not have any impairments. Every child is an individual for him/herself. As teachers not only do we have to know about their disorder, but we have to find a way to find out how much they can, and what they cannot do. We get as much as a pupil can give. The only way to get that is to be patient, creative, motivational and always think of new ideas how to transfer knowledge and help our pupils. Some of the most frequent speech and language difficulties are: dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, stuttering and cluttering. Learners who struggle with any of these have some common problems such as: mixing letters when reading and/or writing, poor vocabulary, difficulties in structuring sentences, pragmatic impairments, bad working memory, bad reading technique, speech fluency difficulties etc. This is the reason why reading comprehension is one of the most difficult things they have to overcome. If we want to be good at reading comprehension tasks, we have to be very good readers with the maximum concentration and focus on the text. That is very difficult for someone who has difficulties in reading and writing, so as teachers we have to know how to help our learners. There are some adjustments that help such as graphical and spatial. My first testing was done with no adjustments and the results were quite bad just as expected. The second testing was conducted with graphical adjustments and the results were much better. Adjustments were made to the length and complexity of the sentences in the text and adjustments to the length and complexity of the tasks in testing, because I wanted to prove that children with speech and language difficulties also can be good at reading comprehension tasks, only if we, as teachers know how to help them.

If the results of the testing before and after the specific adjustments are compared, it can be claimed that my hypothesis was confirmed. Pupils who participated in my research made significant progress after the adjustments had been made. It is important to mention that successful results would not have been achieved without good graphical and content adjustments of the text. The font was much bigger than the first time (Arial 14) and the sentences were written one by one in separate lines. I also shortened them in a way that I omitted some unimportant details. They were structured in such a way that three sentences made a short paragraph (Appendix 7). Reading comprehension is just one of the many teaching contents that presents problems to pupils with disorders. There are many things that can be researched in order to improve the quality of teaching such learners and get more successful results. For example, one of the contents that must be evaluated when teaching a language is writing essays. The question is what types of adjustments the teacher can make in order to get a successfully structured essay by a pupil who struggles with dyslexia, dysgraphia or any kind of language and speech difficulties. Firstly, the teacher has to write short, clear instructions in both languages, bolded and framed to be sure that pupils understand what they have to write. After that, the teacher can divide the paper into paragraphs and write the subtitles above every paragraph so that the pupils know what to write and where. Depending on the diagnosis of the pupils, the teacher can include pictures of possible answers. For example, if the title of the essay is '*How I Spent My Christmas Holidays*', pictures can present different actions that people usually do for Christmas. Everything should be structured very clearly and the teacher should always check if pupils understood what they have to do. To sum up, the teacher has to be aware of the fact that there are more and more children with speech and language difficulties. Sometimes they are placed in regular schools with regular pupils and sometimes they attend specific schools, depending on their impairment and logopedic therapy. The main important thing is to know that there exists a way for such learners to be good readers and pupils who have every right and possibility to learn a foreign language, in this case English, and teachers are there to help them as much as they can.

## 8. REFERENCES

- Ajduković, N., Palčić Strčić, I., i sur. (2017). Postupci prilagodbe i podrške u inkluzivnoj nastavi engleskog jezika. Zagreb, AGENCIJA ZA ODGOJ I OBRAZOVANJE
- Bakota i dr. (2014). Čujete li razliku? Priručnik za edukaciju odgojno-obrazovnih djelatnika za rad s djecom oštećena sluha i/ili govora. Osnovna škola Davorina Trstenjaka. Zagreb.
- Bradarić-Jončić, S., Farago, E., Radić, I. (2008). Leksičko znanje mladeži oštećena sluha. *Hrvatska revija za rehabilitacijska istraživanja*, Vol 44, br. 1, 93-103.
- Clark, J.G. (1981). Uses and abuses of hearing loss classification. *Asha*, 23, 493-500.
- Damico, J., Mueller, and others. (2010). *The handbook of language and speech disorders*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell
- Gassen, M., Marni, J., Mandy, W. (2003). Classroom Accommodations for Students Who Are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing. University of South Dakota, South Dakota.
- Harmer, J. (2000). The Practice of English Language Teaching. Longman ELT
- Hoff, E. (2001). Language Development. Belmont: Wadsworth.
- Leuthke-Stahlman, B. (1998). *Language Issues in Deaf Education*. Hillsboro: Butte Publications.
- Muter, V., Likerman, H. (2010). *Disleksija-vodič kroz disleksiju, dispraksiju i druge teškoće u učenju*. Kigen. Zagreb.
- Nash H, Snowling M. (2006). Teaching new words to children with poor existing vocabulary knowledge: A controlled evaluation of the definition and context methods. *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*. 41(3):335.
- Norris, J. (1995): Expanding language norms for school age children and adolescents. I sit pragmatic? *Language, Speech and Hearing Service sin Schools*, 26, 342-352.
- Puškarić F., Vrbanić S. (2017). Priručnik za pomoćnike u nastavi/stručne komunikacijske posrednike. Zagreb, Grad Zagreb
- RAND Reading Study Group . Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension. RAND Corporation; Santa Monica, CA: 2002.
- Sternberg, R. J. (1996). *Cognitive psychology*. For Worth: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Stothard SE, Hulme C. Reading comprehension difficulties in children: The role of language comprehension and working memory skills. *Reading and Writing*. 1992;4:245–256.

Trškan, D. (2006). Motivacijske tehnike u nastavi, *Povijest u nastavi*, 1, 37

Types of motivation na adresi <https://celfspresessional.wordpress.com/2016/01/21/types-of-motivation/> ( 25.6.2018.)

Underwood, R. (2003). Educating deaf and hard of hearing students in the mainstream classroom. Unpublished masters paper, Washington: Washington University

Westwood, P. (2008). *What teachers need to know about Numeracy*. Copyright Acer Press.

## 9. APPENDICES

1) This is the reading comprehension exercise that pupils wrote in the first testing without any adjustments.

### ONE DAY AT THE ZOO

My name is Mary and I am an animal lover. I have always wanted to go to the ZOO, but I have not had an opportunity. Last Thursday was my thirteenth birthday and my older brother Bill finally took me there.

It was a beautiful, sunny morning. We got on the bus and our adventure started. We live in a small village near the city, so the journey lasted for half an hour. I was very excited because I really wanted to see all those animals, but most of all, I wanted to see the monkeys. They are my favourite animals, because they are so silly.

When we arrived, Bill bought us the tickets. They cost twenty pounds each. We started looking for the monkeys. However, when we found their cage they were hidden inside. Unfortunately, they were sleeping and we were not able to see them straight away. Bill and I agreed to come back later and we moved on.

At the ZOO we saw a lot of wild animals such as elephants, giraffes, lions and crocodiles. There was also a baby bear searching for its mother. The mother bear was eating some fruit behind a big rock and the baby bear could not see her. It was very cute when the baby bear finally found its mother.

My brother took a photo of the lions because he finds them quite fascinating. We stopped for a while to have some rest. It is the biggest ZOO in the city and we had to walk a lot. I was hungry and glad to find out that Bill had some sandwiches in his bag.

After an hour we wanted to check if the monkeys were still asleep. I was so excited to see them awake. One of the monkeys was eating bananas and the rest of them were jumping around their cage. We took a photo of them and walked away to let other visitors see them, too.

When we got home I told our parents about everything we saw that day. Bill showed them the photos and afterwards we had family dinner. We enjoyed a delicious strawberry cake for dessert, too.

Before going to sleep I thanked my brother for the best birthday present ever. I was completely exhausted and I fell asleep immediately.

1) READ THE TEXT AGAIN. CIRCLE TRUE / FALSE / DOESN'T SAY

- a) Mary lives with her parents and three brothers. T/F/DS —
- b) Mary adores animals. T/F/DS —
- c) Mary only wanted to see just the monkeys at the ZOO. T/F/DS —
- d) Bill paid 20 pounds for the tickets. T/F/DS —
- e) Mary and Bill couldn't see the monkeys straight away because they were sleeping. T/F/DS ✓
- f) Mary saw a baby bear playing with its mother. T/F/DS ✓
- g) Mary liked the elephants and the giraffes very much. T/F/DS —
- h) Mary took a photo of the lions because she finds them quite fascinating. T/F/DS ✓
- i) Mary was hungry, but luckily Bill had some sandwiches in his bag. T/F/DS ✓
- j) When they arrived home, they had a family dinner. T/F/DS —
- k) There was a delicious strawberry cake because it was Mary's fourteenth birthday. T/F/DS ✓
- l) Mary was really tired so she fell asleep immediately. T/F/DS ✓ 6/12

2) CIRCLE THE CORRECT ANSWER.

- 1. Mary has always wanted to go to the ZOO, but
  - a) she couldn't afford it.
  - b) there wasn't a ZOO in her city. —
  - c) she hasn't had an opportunity yet.
- 2. Mary and her brother's adventure lasted for
  - a) an hour.
  - b) half an hour. —
  - c) an hour and a half.
  - d) the whole day.
- 3. When Mary and Bill arrived, they started looking for
  - a) the monkeys.
  - b) the lions.
  - c) the baby bear and its mother. ✓
- 4. When the monkeys were finally awake, one of them was eating bananas and the rest of them were
  - a) eating, too. ✓
  - b) jumping around their cage.
  - c) still sleeping.
- 5. When Mary and Bill got home
  - a) Mary fell asleep immediately. —
  - b) they had a family dinner.
  - c) Bill showed the photos to their parents.
- 6. There was a delicious strawberry cake for a dessert.
  - a) strawberry cookie
  - b) strawberry - chocolate cake
  - c) strawberry cake ✓ 3/6

2)

3) CONNECT THE FIRST PART OF THE SENTENCE WITH ITS ENDING.

Last Thursday was Mary's thirteenth birthday, (c) ✓	a) because they are so silly.
The monkeys are Mary's favourite animals (a) ✓	b) the baby bear couldn't see it.
At the ZOO they saw a lot of wild animals, such as (e) ✓	c) so Bill took her to the ZOO.
The mother bear was eating behind the rock, so (b) ✓	d) for the best birthday present ever.
Before going to sleep Mary thanked her brother (d) ✓	e) elephants, giraffes, lions, and crocodiles.

4) PUT THE SENTENCES IN THE CORRECT ORDER.

1. It was a beautiful, sunny morning when Mary and her brother's adventure started.
10. It was very cute when the baby bear finally found its mother.
2. Mary is an animal lover and she has always wanted to go to the ZOO, but she hasn't had an opportunity.
12. Mary was very tired so she fell asleep immediately.
8. There was also a baby bear searching for its mother.
2. After some time Mary became hungry, but, fortunately, Bill had some sandwiches in his bag.
4. After an hour they wanted to check if the monkeys woke up.
11. When they came home they had a family dinner.
6. They saw a lot of wild animals at the ZOO, such as elephants, giraffes, lions and crocodiles.
4. Unfortunately, the monkeys were sleeping so they couldn't see them.
7. One of the monkeys was eating bananas and the rest of them were jumping around their cage.
3. The most of all the animals, Mary wanted to see the monkeys.

→ 1/11

3) This is the reading comprehension exercise that pupils wrote in the second testing, with graphical and content adjustments.

30/30 (5)

1) Circle T (TRUE), F (FALSE) or DS (DOESN'T SAY).

Zaokruži T (TOČNO), F (NETOČNO) ili DS (NE SPOMINJE SE).

a) Mary lives with her parents and three brothers. T / F / DS ✓

b) Mary adores animals. T / F / DS ✓

c) Mary wanted to see **just** the monkeys at the ZOO. T / F / DS ✓

d) Bill payed **20 pounds** for **two** tickets. T / F / DS ✓

e) Mary and Bill couldn't see the monkeys straight away because they were sleeping. T / F / DS ✓

f) Mary saw a **baby bear playing with its mother**. T / F / DS ✓

g) **Mary** took a photo of the lions because she finds them quite fascinating. T / F / DS ✓

h) Mary was hungry, but luckily Bill had some sandwiches in his bag. T / F / DS ✓

i) When they arrived home, they **first** had a family dinner. T / F / DS ✓

j) There was a delicious strawberry cake because it was Mary's **fourteenth** birthday. T / F / DS ✓

k) Mary was really tired so she fell asleep immediately. T / F / DS ✓

11/11

4)

2) **CIRCLE** the correct answer.  
**ZAOKRUŽI** točan odgovor.

- 1 Mary always wanted to go to the ZOO, but:
- a) she couldn't afford it.
  - b) there wasn't a ZOO in her city.
  - c) she hasn't had an opportunity. ✓
- 2 Mary and her brother's adventure lasted for:
- a) an hour.
  - b) half an hour. ✓
  - c) hour and a half.
  - d) the whole day.
- 3 When Mary and Bill arrived, they started looking for:
- a) the monkeys. ✓
  - b) the lions.
  - c) the baby bear and its mother.
- 4 When the monkeys were finally awake, one of them was eating bananas and the rest of them were:
- a) eating, too.
  - b) jumping around their cage. ✓
  - c) still sleeping.
- 5 When Mary and Bill got home:
- a) Mary fell asleep immediately.
  - b) they had a family dinner.
  - c) Mary showed the photos to her parents. ✓
- 5/5

5)

3) **MATCH** the correct sentences.

Use different colour for each new sentence.

**SPOJI** točne rečenice.

Koristi različitu boju za svaku novu rečenicu.

1) Last Thursday was  
Mary's thirteenth



... because they  
are so silly.

2) The monkeys are  
Mary's favourite animals...



... the baby bear  
couldn't see it.

3) At the ZOO they saw a lot  
of wild animals, such as...



... so Bill took  
her to the ZOO.

4) The mother bear was  
eating behind the rock, so...



... for the best  
birthday present.

5) Before going to sleep  
Mary thanked her brother...



... elephants,  
giraffes, lions, and  
crocodiles.

5/5

6)

4) Put the sentences in the **CORRECT ORDER**.

Stavi rečenice u **ISPRAVAN REDOSLIJED**.

2 Bill took Mary to the ZOO for her birthday. ✓

1 Mary has always wanted to go to the ZOO.

10 Mary was very tired so she fell asleep immediately. ✓

6 After some time Mary became hungry. ✓

They ate some sandwiches.

7 After an hour they wanted to see the monekeys again. ✓

9 When they came home Mary showed her family the photos. ✓

They had a family dinner, too.

5 They saw a lot of wild animals at the ZOO, such as: elephantes, ✓  
giraffes, lions and crocodiles.

7 Unfortunately, the monkeys were sleeping. ✓

They decide to come back later.

8 Now, the monkeys were not sleeping. ✓

One of the monkeys was eating bananas.

3 First, Mary wanted to see the monkeys. ✓

9/9

7) This is the text after the graphical adjustment that pupils got in the second testing.

## ONE DAY AT THE ZOO

My name is Mary and I am an animal lover.

I have always wanted to go to the ZOO.

But, I have not had an opportunity.

Last Thursday was my thirteenth birthday.

My older brother Bill finally took me to the ZOO.

It was a beautiful, sunny morning.

We got on the bus and our adventure started.

We live in a small village near the city.

So, the journey lasted for half an hour.

I was very excited because I really wanted to see all those animals.

Most of all, I wanted to see the monkeys.

They are my favourite animals, because they are so silly.

When we arrived, Bill bought us the tickets.

They cost twenty pounds each.

We started looking for the monkeys.

When we found their cage they were hidden inside.

They were sleeping and we could not see them.

Bill and I agreed to come back later and we moved on.

At the ZOO we saw a lot of wild animals.

We saw elephants, giraffes, lions and crocodiles.

There was also a baby bear searching for its mother.

The mother bear was eating some fruit behind a big rock.

The baby bear could not see her.

It was very cute when the baby bear finally found its mother.

My brother took a photo of the lions.

He finds them quite fascinating.

We stopped for a while to have some rest.

It is the biggest ZOO in the city and we had to walk a lot.

I was hungry.

I was glad to find out that Bill had some sandwiches in his bag.

After an hour we wanted to check if the monkeys were still asleep.

I was so excited to see them awake.

One of the monkeys was eating bananas.

The rest of them were jumping around their cage.

We took a photo of them and walked away to let other visitors see them, too.

When we got home I told our parents about everything we saw that day.

I showed them the photos.

Afterwards we had family dinner.

We enjoyed a delicious strawberry cake for dessert, too.

Before going to sleep I thanked my brother for the best birthday present ever.

I was completely exhausted.

I fell asleep immediately.

8) The text and the task from the third testing.

## ONE DAY AT THE ZOO

1

My name is Mary. I love animals.

I have always wanted to go to the ZOO.

But, I have not had an opportunity.

Last Thursday was my thirteenth birthday.

My older brother Bill finally took me to the ZOO.

It was a beautiful, sunny morning.

We got on the bus and our adventure started.

We live in a small village near the city.

So, our bus trip lasted for thirty minutes.

I was very excited because I really wanted to see all those animals.

Most of all, I wanted to see the monkeys.

Monkeys are my favourite animals, because they are so silly.

ZAOKRUŽI T (TOČNO) ILI F (NETOČNO).

- |    |   |       |
|----|---|-------|
| a) | Mary lives with her parents and three brothers. | T / F |
| b) | Mary loves animals.                             | T / F |
| c) | Mary wants to go to the ZOO.                    | T / F |
| d) | Mary is fourteen years old.                     | T / F |
| e) | Mary and Bill went to the ZOO by car.           | T / F |
| f) | Mary's favourite animals are tigers.            | T / F |
| g) | The weather was rainy and windy.                | T / F |
| h) | Mary and Bill live in a village.                | T / F |

When we arrived, Bill bought us the tickets.

One ticket cost 20 pounds.

We started looking for the monkeys.

When we found their cage they were inside their houses.

They were sleeping and we could not see them.

Bill and I decided to come back later.

At the ZOO we saw a lot of wild animals.

We saw elephants, giraffes, lions and crocodiles.

There was also a baby bear searching for its mother.

The mother bear was eating some fruit behind a big rock.

The baby bear could not see her.

It was very cute when the baby bear finally found its mother.

My brother took a photo of the lions. They are his favourite animals.

We were tired. We stopped.

It is the biggest ZOO in the city and we had to walk a lot.

I was hungry.

I was happy because Bill had some sandwiches in his bag.

After an hour we went back to the monkeys' cage.

I was very happy. They weren't sleeping any more.

One of the monkeys was eating bananas.

Other monkeys were jumping around their cage.

We took a photo of them and walked away to let other visitors see them, too.

1 Bill bought two tickets. Two tickets cost:

- a) 20 pounds.
- b) 40 pounds.
- c) 60 pounds.

2 When Mary and Bill arrived, they started looking for:

- a) the monkeys.
- b) the lions.
- c) the baby bear and its mother.

3 Mary and Bill didn't see the monkeys first, because they were:

- a) jumping.
- b) eating.
- c) sleeping.

4 The baby bear was:

- a) eating.
- b) searching for its mother.
- c) playing.

5 Bill's favourite animals are:

- a) giraffes.
- b) lions.
- c) elephants.

6 When the monkeys were finally awake, one of them was eating bananas and the rest of them were:

- a) eating, too.

- b) jumping around their cage.
- c) sleeping.

When we got home I told our parents about everything we saw that day.

I showed them the photos.

After looking at the photos we had family dinner.

We enjoyed a delicious strawberry cake for dessert, too.

Before going to sleep I thanked my brother for the best birthday present ever.

I was very tired and sleepy.

I fell asleep in a second.

**SPOJI** točne rečenice.

Koristi različitu boju za svaku novu rečenicu.

1) At home Mary told her parents...

... a strawberry cake for dessert.

2) Mary showed her parents...

... about their day at the ZOO;

3) After dinner they had...

... for the best birthday present.

4) Mary was very tired and...

... she feel asleep in a second.

### **Izjava o samostalnoj izradi rada**

Ja, Valentina Karagić, studentica Učiteljskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, izjavljujem da sam ovaj rad izradila samostalno uz uporabu navedene literature i konzultacije s mentoricom.

U Zagrebu, 10.7.2018.

---

